



Loss of Meaning in Translation: The Case Study of a Nepali Novel ‘Basain’

Correspondence:	Dr. Ramesh Prasad Adhikary Assistant Professor (English) TU, M. M. Campus, Nepalgunj, Nepal <rameshadhikary29@gmail.com>
-----------------	--

Abstract

The research paper titled ‘Loss of Meaning in Translation: The Case Study of a Nepali Novel Basain’ was an attempt of the researcher to find out the cases of cultural meaning loss in the translation of a novel ‘Basain’. It further aimed to explore the causes of loss of meaning in translation. In addition, it aimed to analyze the ways that can be used to compensate the meaning gap in translation as well. Only the secondary sources of data were used in the study employing descriptive and analytical design along with qualitative data. Twenty two cases of meaning loss in the translation of the novel Basain were found. The study also explored causes of the loss of meaning to occur in translation. Some of the major causes were pointed out i.e. cultural gap, deletion, negligence of the translator, lack of functional equivalence, lack of co-cultural and socio-cultural knowledge (of the SL) of the translator, over generalization of the meaning, carelessness of the translator, incomplete linguistic knowledge (of the SL) of the translator, transliteration and so on.

Keywords: cultural terms; equivalence; gaps; loss; manipulation; translation; SL

1. Introduction

1.1 General Background

Translation studies is a new and emerging discipline. However, translation itself is as old as human civilization. The activity of translating began along with the existence of language as a means of communication. As the world developed, simultaneously with the existence and development of many languages, this multilingual nature of the world created the existence of translation as an obligatory phenomenon. The development of language and culture varies from one community to another and creates a gap between them. While this is happening, translation is the only way to break the cultural, linguistic, contextual and psychological barriers between (the people of) such communities.

Bhattarai (2007) writes “it was Andre Lefebvre who proposed the designation of translation studies for the first time in 1978 to replace the terms like ‘Translation Theory’ used in general contemporary ‘Translatology’ in Canada, ‘Translatologia’ in Spain and so on” (p. 1). It underwent different changes in the course of time and is constantly undergoing change until recently.

The word ‘translation’ is etymologically carried out from a Latin word ‘trans’ and ‘lactum’ in which ‘trans’ means across and ‘lactum’ means to carry. Generally, it is the rendering of a text into another language. Many scholars have defined it in various ways. It is an art, a science and a skill for respective scholars, however for Newmark (1988, p. 6), “it is first a science and then a skill, third an art and fourth a matter of taste”. This shows that defining translation in a single word is incomplete and even inappropriate. Newmark (1988, p. 5) has defined translation as “rendering the meaning of a text into another language in a way that the author intends the text”. Newmark (1981) sees translation as “a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language” (p. 7). According to Newmark (1981), translation is all the science, skill, an art and the matter of taste.

Translation, in its sense, is an obligatory phenomenon of the present day world as it is a vehicle to accelerate the present multilingual world. Its theory covers a wide range of pursuits, attempts always to be useful to assist the individual translator both by stimulating to write better and to suggest points of agreement on common translation problems. Wilss (1982, p.18) states that now we are on the threshold of a planetary era in which local and regional conflicts will be suppressed and the dynamics of global adaptation and civilizing cosmopolitanisms will begin to be the predominant driving force which will be accelerated through translation. For Wilss (1982), “the twentieth century employed translation extensively as a most powerful and indispensable vehicle for disseminating knowledge and information”.

1.1.1 Importance of Translation

Translation is also a means of communication. It is a technique of learning a foreign language, which allows an exercise of a learner’s intelligence to develop his competence. Translation is only the vehicle to accelerate the multilingual world. Translation has helped to bring cohesion in our multilingual and multicultural society. It plays a crucial role to establish world literature because it is the only way to break the linguistic barriers, bringing together what lies beyond time and space.

Narshimhaiah and Srinath (as cited in Bhattarai 2007, p. 11) write focusing on the importance of translation as “the world came to know of the ‘Vedas and Upanishads and Gita’ outside the charmed circle of the Brahmins in South Asia through translation”. Translation has narrowed down the world in such a way that the world cannot even be imagined in absence of it. Translation is not simply an act of imitation or substitution; it is also the means of innovation i.e. innovation in the receiver language. That is why the translators must meet the challenges in the context of the world being narrowed down with every decade passing by. Translation helps impart knowledge about a varied world of literature which further helps understand multiple cultures.

1.1.2 Translation of Culture

As language is context-bound and to understand the meaning of a text, the culture associated should be judged and observed in depth. It shows that translation is less linguistic and more cultural procedure. This view is epitomized in a statement such as one does not translate language but culture. It is difficult to decide whether translation is a cultural activity or not. But most of the scholars agree that culture is one of the important aspects of translation. According to the supporters of cultural translation, it is not only a finite language activity, but it is also an ongoing cultural one. Translation can only be studied along with speech acts in socio-cultural setting. The reason is that in translation, we transfer culture not language. House (1994) and Ivir (1987) also comment that cultural contact presupposes translation. By these points, we can say that, in effect, one does not translate the language but translates the culture and thus, in translation, we transform cultures not languages.

A language is determined and shaped by the culture. Because of this phenomenon, a translator will be translating a culture while translating a text. The world is not only bilingual but also bi-cultural. Therefore, every culture has a specific term or word that is distinct to the other culture. Translating culture is difficult due to the lack of equivalence in the target language culture. Translation of cultural terms from a literary text is difficult and because of this, a meaning gap exists while translating the text. Although culture creates a gap between two worlds and makes a translator’s job infinitely complex or even virtually impossible, it is possible to translate a culture from one language to another with adjustment and even some loss.

According to Richards, Platt and Weber (1985, p. 70) culture means the total set of beliefs, attitudes, costumes, behaviours and social habits etc. of the member of a particular society. Culture is a way of life in a society that consists of the prescribed ways of behaving or norms of conduct, beliefs, values and skills. It also includes the institutions, values, religions, communities, foods, heritage, and histories and so on. Language is context-bound and to understand the meaning of a text, culture should be judged in depth. Viewing the importance of a culture in translation, in recent years there has been a shift in translation studies from linguistically-oriented approaches to culturally-oriented ones.

1.1.3 Loss of Meaning in Translation

Lack of correspondence between the source language (SL) and target language (TL) items creates a gap in translation and results in the loss of meaning. That is, the loss of meaning in translation is due to the gap that exists between the two languages. Generally, it is regarded that the gap in translation is common and natural as no language and cultures are the same. Thus, it can both be found in TL and SL.

We find two languages, cultures, contexts etc. always different to some extent. Subsequently, while translating we are bridging the gap between two cultures and languages. It means that a text is the combination of a language and a culture within certain context. Gaps are the serious threats in translation. According to Crystal (1987) exact equivalence is of course impossible, no translator could provide a translation that was a perfect parallel to the sources text, there is always some loss in information (p. 346). Anyway the translator’s main concern in translation should be to bridge the gaps so as to make the translation meaningful and faithful as the original. According to House (1994) there are three types of gaps in translation: **a)** Linguistic gap, **b)** Cultural gap, and, **c)** Extra-linguistic gap.

1.1.3.1 Linguistic gap

The gap where the absence of a typical terminology persists is called linguistic gap. The languages which are used in the world are different from one another. We can observe this gap at different levels of a language. Such as:

1.1.3.1.1 Graphological level: Two languages are different in their graphics. Graphemes available in one language may be absent in another language.

1.1.3.1.2 Phonological level: Phonemes of different languages are not the same. English has 44 phonemes but Nepali has only 35. If the exact phonological correspondence is impossible, it certainly creates problems in translation.

1.1.3.1.3 Lexical/word level: Some lexical words create serious problems in translation. Same lexical items available in a source language may not be available in the target language.

1.1.3.1.4 Structure level: The difference in linguistic structures and the grammar rules between the languages creates a gap.

1.1.3.1.5 Functional level: It is hardly possible to get equivalence of meaning at functional level if the translator is not aware of the ambiguous meaning contained in the text.

1.1.3.2 Cultural Gap

Culture is an inseparable part of the language. Translation is more cultural and less linguistic activity. It creates gaps in translation. It may have the belief and concept in one culture and another lacks that creates cultural gaps.

1.1.3.3 Extra-linguistic gap

The extra-linguistic (pragmatic) gaps occur when there is a problem of correspondence between the context of a source language text and a target language text. Pragmatics plays a crucial role in the formation of a text. In brief, when the background knowledge and real world knowledge differ, extra-linguistic gaps occur. Such as the following example shows pragmatic gap as a Hindu widow wears white dress but this kind of concept is not available in English culture.

1.1.4 Compensating Meaning Gap in Translation

The loss of meaning that is the gap in translation can be compensated. Bridging the gaps between the two languages or cultures is one of the main concentrations of a translator. There are some procedures and/or strategies that help compensate these gaps or loss. Being based on Ivir (1987, p. 37), following procedures can be used to compensate the gaps and loss of meaning in translation:

- a. Borrowing/Transliteration
- b. Naturalization
- c. Literal Translation
- d. Recognized Translation
- e. Addition
- f. Deletion/Omission
- g. Substitution
- h. Sense Translation
- i. Blending
- j. Reduction
- k. Elaboration
- l. Definition
- m. Componential Analysis
- n. Functional Equivalence
- o. Pragmatic Equivalence
- q. Descriptive Equivalence

1.1.6 Introduction to ‘Basain’

Basain is one of the social novels written by Lil Bahadur Chhetri. The novel is written within a typical Nepalese social periphery showing the poor hilly Nepalese socio-cultural condition. The title of novel is justified by the plots explaining the socio-economic condition and tradition of the then society as a sole cause of migration. A poor family of Nepalese society becomes obliged to migrate due to the social and economic causes in the novel. Michael J. Hutt translated Basain as ‘Mountains Painted with Turmeric’. He has tried to bring to light an iconic Nepali novel: the story of sheltered villagers faced with a harsh, changing world. He has tried to share his deep empathy and fine understanding of Nepali reality of socio-economical world through his translation. His focus, on translation, can be observed mainly in the daily farm work and chores, the gossip chain, the weekly market, the limited opportunities, the rapacious rich preying on the poor, and women’s particular vulnerabilities. In fact, it has offered the TL readers a window to the lives of the people by depicting in subtle details the stark realities of village life.

2. Methodology

The researcher has adopted following methodological strategies to fulfill the objectives of the study:

2.1 Sources of Data

The researcher has made use of the secondary source of data only in the study. Mainly, the Nepali and English versions of the novel Basain has been used as the source of data in the study. Further, some of the related previously studied theses, and related books were also used as the sources of data for this study. Some of them were: Newmark (1981), Wilss (1982), Crystal (1987), Newmark (1988), House (1994), House (2002), Sharma (2004), Bhandari (2007) and Bhattarai (2007).

2.2 Sampling Procedure

To carry out this research, the researcher studied both English and Nepali versions intensively and found out the cases of meaning loss in translation. The identified instances were picked up and taken into the study. The cases have analyzed alongside with their causes to happen so and the ways to overcome those problems while analyzing and interpreting the collected data.

2.3 Tools for Data Collection

Observation was one and the only tool to collect the required data for the study. The researcher developed an observational check list and used it to collect and arrange the data. Both the English and Nepali versions of novel were intensively studied to collect the data for the study.

2.4 Process of Data Collection

The researcher, first of all, collected both the English and Nepali versions of the novel and studied them in depth. Then, an overview of Nepali version was made by collecting the possible instances of meaning loss in translation. The possible words, phrases, clauses, and/or sentences were picked up and the English version was studied to search for their equivalence. The collected words, phrases, clauses and/or sentences were transliterated and the translation of which was noted down. Finally, the researcher identified the loss of meaning along with the causes of the loss. The sentences that were taken for study are given below:

- 1) Dhane got up, went to the fire place took out a glowing ember from the ashes, and lit a stub of tobacco wrapped in an āgerī leaf.
- 2) If anything goes wrong, I' ll lose the oxen and everything else as well.
- 3) He works hard, he is industrious.
- 4) Hariram! The price of the buffalo is 120 rupees; the interest must be delivered to Hariram' s house at the end of every month.
- 5) It seems that bankale has got it.
- 6) She helps her husband' s sister to wash the pots and to mill and pound the grain.
- 7) Bhauju (Bhauju: elder brother' s sister), the food' s ready. Would you serve the meal today?
- 8) Teej had just taken its leave of the women of Nepalese society.
- 9) Maina touched Dhane' s feet with her head and stood up.
- 10) She is dying to go, anyway.
- 11) lulu! Drive them up from behind, thuli.
- 12) There' s no sindur in my hair, and I am not wearing a bead necklace, can' t you see?
- 13) These streams bring life to the khet field in the valley below.
- 14) With one voice, the council judged in the baidar' s favor and authorized him to take away Dhane' s oxen and buffalo.
- 15) And she remembered that once Jhuma had mentioned that her monthly dharma had stopped.
- 16) One day in the middle of Magh, Jhuma had gone into the forest to cut some fodder.
- 17) They say he left in Phagun -22.
- 18) The path forked at Bagedanda.
- 19) The old folk said that an old woman of the forest lived on these cliffs.
- 20) We must cut Dhane off from sharing our water; we don' t know who did this or what he was.
- 21) The next morning, all the big man of the village gathered in Nande' s yard to decide Dhane' s fate.
- 22) Every object in there- the millstone and the husking machine, and even the beams, pillars and roof pole- gave her plenty to remember...

3. Analysis and Interpretation

Here, the transliteration of the SL texts, their TL equivalence and the instance of loss of meaning will be given. After their general presentation, the causes of meaning loss will be analyzed along with the analysis of possible ways to overcome such meaning loss in translation. As the collected data are qualitative in nature, they have been analyzed and interpreted descriptively in a narration and have been presented descriptively. For the clarity, this part has been divided into sub-headings as well.

3.1 Transliteration and Anecdotal Evaluation of the Cases

The transliteration of Nepali texts as well as their equivalent translation into the English language along with their short anecdotal evaluation has been dealt in this sub-heading.

- 1) **SL:** dhane uthyo ra āgenāko dilmā āi hātīle khosrera kharānīmuni ghusārī rākheko āgoko bharbharāudo agult o jhikī āgerī pātmā bereko surtiko thuto salkāuna thālyo.

TL: Dhane got up, went to the fire place took out a glowing ember from the ashes, and lit a stub of tobacco wrapped in an āgerī leaf.

The term āgenā in SL keeps cultural significance and has some more cultural meaning than that of the TL term fire place. As same as this, āgerī is a plant having toxicant leaf which in general is used by poor Nepalese

villagers to wrap the tobacco for smoking. The translator has tried to translate these culturally and geographically significant words while translating the Novel. However, the translation has lost the original and real flavour of the words in its rendering.

2) **SL:** kehī kisim bigriyo bhane halkā goru samet janchan...tara kaso bigrelāra!

TL: If anything goes wrong, I' ll lose the oxen and everything else as well.

Though the SL text is not culturally so colorful, its target language expression has not become completely successful to render the exact sense of original text. The term halkāgoru denotes the oxen that are used for ploughing the field. The term 'oxen' does not clearly indicate the original sense of an SL text just by its rendering as 'oxen' in the TL.

3) **SL:** mihinet garcha! udhyog garcha.

TL: He works hard, he is industrious.

The SL term udhyoggarnu does not refer to industrious in the TL as it generally means to labour hard in the farm work. In this regard, the translator has over generalized the original sense and thus mistranslated the terminology. Actual meaning of the source text is deviated and interpreted differently than what it is actually intended. As a result, it rendered the message somehow different from what it actually had.

4) **SL:** harīrāmko ke bhane, bhāsīko dām cha-bīs rupiyābho, byāj mahinā marne bittikai harīramko gharmai puryāidinuparcha.

TL: Hariram! The price of the buffalo is 120 rupees; the interest must be delivered to Hariram' s house at the end of every month.

The term 'harīrāmko' , as used in the SL, does not refer to the belongingness of someone else (i.e., any noun) but is a meaningless word often spoken in the conversation, generally used by Nepalese old people while speaking. It does not indicate to any person or people. However, the translator has regarded it as a noun while translating the text. The expression "the interest must be delivered to Hariram' s house.." clearly shows that Hariram is the name of a person which is not in fact. Thus, the original sense of the SL expression has been deviated while translating it into the English language and that causes the loss of meaning in translating.

5) **SL:** bankāle bhetāe jasto cha.

TL: It seems that bankale has got it.

Banko Devi is regarded as the deity of the people. It is generally believed that she lives in the forest and takes care of all the animals and plants. If she gets angry, she can perform something that goes wrong to the human beings. Here, "bankale" refers to "by bankodevi" in the SL expression in which the translator has translated the term bankale (by bankodevi) as a single noun as a whole "bankale". As a result, the original sense of the SL terminology (expression) has been deviated and produced somehow different message.

6) **SL:** nandalāī bhādākūdā mājhna au kut na-pidhna u saghāuche.

TL: She helps her husband' s sister to wash the pots and to mill and pound the grain.

Husband' s younger sister in Nepali is called 'nanda' as it is one of the terms of kinship that denotes the lovely and dearest one. His elder sister is called 'aamaju' . The TL does not have such words to denote for. Further the translation of 'nanda' as "husband' s sister" does not specify whether it is a younger or an elder one. Thus, the original sense associated with the SL culture has not been rendered by its translation.

7) **SL:** bhāujyu, bhānsā tayār bhayo, āj timīle deu na hai.

TL: Bhauju (Bhauju: elder brother' s sister), the food' s ready. Would you serve the meal today?

Bhāuju is a Nepalese kinship term referring to one' s elder brother' s wife. But, the translator has translated it as "elder brother' s sister". It has created a vast difference between the SL and TL meanings. That is, meaning is mistranslated in the TL. Further, the SL expression is more informal in the family setting which indicates closeness between the two characters. However, the TL expression is more formal and shows some sorts of social distance between the interlocutors. As a result, the intensity of expression has deviated and the meaning has been mistransferred due to the misinterpretation of the family kinship term.

8) **SL:** tījle nepālī samājmā nārīharubāt bharkhar bidā liyo.

TL: Teej had just taken its leave of the women of Nepalese society.

‘Teej’ is one of the deeply rooted cultural words that refers to one of the famous Nepalese festival of a woman. The translator has just transliterated the SL terminology into the TL while rendering it. Due to this, it fails to transfer the original cultural flavour of the SL text into the TL. Further, the TL readers may be in confusion what the “teej” actually is. Thus, the meaning is lost and the translation has become unable to render the exact flavour of SL text to the TL readers.

9) **SL:** maināle dhaneko godāma dhogī ra telko cauthī liyera uthī.

TL: Maina touched Dhane’ s feet with her head and stood up.

To touch one’ s feet with self-forehead bowing the head (dhognu) is one of the greatest respects that are offered by the youngest to elders in Nepalese culture and society. Maina (Dhane’ s wife) did so after messaging his feet with hot oil to show (express) her respect, faithfulness and obedience as his wife by doing so. But, this type of culturally rooted meaning does not carry by the just expression “maina touched dhane’ s feet with her head” in the TL. Thus, the translation has transferred the literal meaning being failed to render the exact cultural taste of the original expression.

10) **SL:** nānī sāthīharusita āphai gaer eutā gunyu ra coloko lugā kinera lyauchin, jāna rahar pani gardaichin.

TL: She is dying to go, anyway.

Nānī is one of the dearest kinship terms generally used by an elder brother’ s wife to her husband’ s younger sisters. ‘Gunnyu’ and ‘Cholo’ are the typical Nepali female dresses. The instance of translation above does not carry both of these socio-cultural scenario. Further, the SL expression shows the interest and willingness of Jhuma to go to market and to buy ‘gunyu’ and ‘cholo’ for herself. However, the translated expression indicates her obligation to go and to have so. Thus, the intensity of meaning highly differs between the two expressions. As a result, the meaning is deviated and has lost the original flavor in its translation.

11) **SL:** lu-lu pachibāt dhapāide-de thūlī.

TL: lu lu! Drive them up from behind, thuli.

“lulu” is a readymade formulaic expression, that is a chunk of readymade speech used to start some conversation. Further, it shows permission to do something in the SL. As the translator has just transliterated the term (chunk) which gives no meaning to the TL readers. Thus, meaning is lost in translation. It would be better if this type of redundant words and expressions could be omitted in translation.

12) **SL:** mero sīdur pote chainan, dekhnuhunna.

TL: There’ s no sindur in my hair, and I am not wearing a bead necklace, can’ t you see?
(Sindur-Vermillion powder)

Both “sindur” (a kind of vermillion powder) and “pote” (a kind of bead necklace) are the things that are put/worn by the married women in the SL culture. They are the symbols of marriage as well as of prosperity which they (married women) have to put/wear continuously until their husband is dead. So far as the instance given above is concerned, the SL expression clearly expresses that the girl is unmarried having no ‘sindur’ and ‘pote’ on her forehead.

As the translator literally translated the SL expression, these cultural and original flavours of the SL meaning have not been rendered in the TL.

13) **SL:** yinai kholsā tala besīka khetharukā jīwandātā hun.

TL: These streams bring life to the khet field in the valley below.

“khet” in SL refers to the field where paddy is cultivated and harvested. Rest of other types of field in SL is called “bārī”, “pākhā” or “tār”. The translator has translated the term “khet” as the ‘khet field’ which has not rendered the intended meaning of the SL expression. It makes the TL readers get confused in what the ‘khet field’ actually it is.

14) **SL:** pancāyatle ekai swarmā baidārko paksamā nirn·aya liyo. Dhaneko halgoru ra bhaisī baidārle lāne bhae.

TL: With one voice, the council judged in the Baidar’ s favor and authorized him to take away Dhane’ s oxen and buffalo.

The translator has translated the SL term “*pancāyat*” as ‘council’ in the TL while translating. In fact “*pancāyat*” is a typical and deeply rooted cultural term in the SL. It is a group of five traditional village administrators– Mukhiya, Bahidar, Dittha, Bichari and Karbari who use to rule the villages. Later, the term is used in practice to refer to a group of wise people who decided the justice/injustice in the village s. Thus, the translation of “*pancāyat*” as ‘council’ does not transfer the original sense that is associated with the SL expression.

15) SL: ani uslai samjhanā bhayo-ektākā jhumāle masikdharma rokieko kurā garthī.

TL: And she remembered that once Jhuma had mentioned that her monthly dharma had stopped.

‘*māsik dharma*’ in SL refers to menstruation in TL in general. It has high socio- cultural values in SL culture and society however has no significance in the TL. Women, during the period of their menstruation, are regarded as secular, unsacred and untouchable (esp. to water and food). The translation does not talk about it. Further, the stopping of menstruation denotes that the woman is pregnant. As menstruation in SL is a matter of holiness and sin, to obey the socio cultural norms, values and practices that are imposed upon women during their menstruation are regarded as their dharma (duty). The translator has blended the term as “monthly dharma” in the TL while translating, which does not convey the detailed original flavour of the text.

16) SL: ek din māghko mājmā jhumā ghās kātna bhanera ban gaekī thii.

TL: One day in the middle of Magh, Jhuma had gone into the forest to cut some fodder.

Magh is the 10th month of Nepali calendar that falls in January–February. Here the translator has transliterated the name of month in its rendering as well. But it does not convey the TL reader what actually the “magh” is. Thus, it causes meaning loss in translation that is unintelligible to its TL readers.

17) SL: tyo phāgunmai gayo re.

TL: They say he left in Phagun.

Phalgun is the 11th month of Nepali calendar. It generally falls in February–March. As the translator has transliterated the term in the TL, it does not convey anything (any message) to the TL.

18) SL: bāghedādābāta dot·a bāt·ā phāt·ekā thie.

TL: The path forked at Bagedanda.

The SL term “*bāghedādā*” is a noun referring to a local hill. It is a hill named after perhaps a tiger. Tiger may have been found there once or people might have a killed tiger once there and following so, they may name it “*baghedanda*”. This message does not carry by its rendering while it is just transliterated in the TL.

19) SL: budha-purānāharuko bhanāi cha, “bankī budhenī yasai bhīrmā bās garchin”.

TL: The old folk said that an old woman of the forest lived on these cliffs.

“*bankibudheni*” (an old woman of the forest) has socio-cultural value in the SL text. People generally believe that an old woman used to live on the cliffs in the forest that protects life if she gets happy and destroys if she gets unhappy. As the stated instance is concerned, the old people say and believe so. The translator has translated the term ‘*budhapurana*’ (means old people) as ‘old folk’ which has conveyed different meaning then that of its original sense.

20) SL: dhaneko pānī banda garnuparcha, kasko ho, ke ho, kahile dekhiko laspas ho, najānikana kasarī khānu pānī?

TL: We must cut Dhane off from sharing our water; we don’ t know who did this or what he was.

There is a general tradition in the SL society that if something asocial has happened or if any member of the family does something that is indigestible in the existing society the whole family would cut off from all sorts of social relationship by the villagers (other members of the society). Pre-marital sex is prohibited in the Nepalese society and culture. Jhuma got pregnant before her marriage and thus, all the

other people of the village decided to cut their family off from the social relationship with rest of the people. Translator has tried to render this message stating cut off of Dhane from sharing water among the villagers. However, it has not rendered why and how this is so. Thus, some sorts of meaning loss have been occurred in the translation.

- 21) **SL:** bholipalt a nandeko āganmā gāukā thulāthāluharu bhelā bhai dhaneko bhāgya nirnaya garirahekā thie.

TL: The next morning, all the big man of the village gathered in Nande’ s yard to decide Dhane’ s fate.

The translator has translated the SL term ‘thulathala’ as ‘the big man’ while rendering the message of the text. The SL term denotes the people at decision making level at the village, which translates just as ‘big’ man’ does not convey. The SL terminology is more status focused as the TL one is more size focused.

- 22) **SL:** yahākā pratyek bastu jāto dhikī yahātak ki balo, khābo, dhūrī sabai kura uslāī jīwanbharī samjhadaī, rudai garna paryāpta thie.

TL: every object in there-the millstone and the husking machine, and even the beams, spillars and roof pole- gave her plenty to remember...

The term dhiki, and janto are typical to Nepali culture and society. They both are the traditional machines. Thejanto is a pair of stones used to grind the grains. Similarly, dhiki is a wooden made traditional machine used for husking especially the paddy. The translator has translated these terms as ‘millstone’ and ‘husking machine’ respectively. Here, the SL terms are more tradition-oriented and domestic whereas the TL terms are mechanical and industrious. The similar is the case for other terms like balo, khanbo and dhuri where the translated terms have carried out the technical meaning ignoring the cultural one.

3.2 Analysis of the Translation

The translator of the novel has translated the Nepali social novel ‘Basain’ into the English language entitled ‘Mountains Painted with Turmeric’. Michel J. Hutt, the translator, has made his attempt to recreate the Nepali novel in the English scenario. His effort in translation is really appraisable. However, as the case of meaning loss is concerned, it is found that the translator has used transliteration, literal translation, elaboration, blending, sense translation, and naturalization techniques while rendering the text into TL. The original meaning of the text has been found intact in many cases while translating. But, it does not mean that the translation is not so good in overall. It is in fact, a good creation. Wherever the causes to be/have so which has been analyzed in the following section.

3.3 Causes of Meaning Loss in Translation

Translation is not just the transference of the original text but it is the transcreation of something new. Thus, some loss and gain of meaning in translation is common and natural. There are some causes of meaning loss in translation. As the causes of meaning loss in the translation of novel Basain are concerned, following causes can be explored.

3.3.1 Lack of Cultural Equivalence

Translation is not only a linguistic activity but it is also a cultural one. In another word, a translator does not only translate a language but also the culture associated with the text. Translation and culture are so closely related that the rendering of the information of any text becomes impossible without transculturation. Language is context bound and to understand the meaning of a text, contextual factor (i.e. culture) should be judged and observed in depth.

Translation is less linguistic and more or even exclusively, a cultural procedure. Translation of culture is a new area of interest in the field of translation studies.

Cultural translation is a concept used in cultural studies to denote the process of transformation in a given culture. Being an emerging discipline in its own, it is so crucial that human life is impossible and worthless in absence of it. It has made familiar different cultures among the multi-lingual that have further helped establish peace and harmony, sense of closeness and beauty and fraternity among the people of different cultural background. As the instances of lack of cultural equivalence in the novel Basain are concerned, there is no concept of the “bankodevi” (the deity of the forest) in the English language and culture. This is why the translator has just transliterated the term as “bankale” in translation so that the term does not convey any message to the target language readers. Similarly, “teej” refers to a typical Nepalese Hindu cultural festival of females. This has no cultural equivalence in the target language so that

the translator has just transliterated the term. Due to this, the translation has lost the cultural meaning in the target language.

Similar is the case with another instance. Married women in the Nepalese culture put sindur, a red powder, in their hair and wear a bead necklace around their neck. Jhuma by saying- “there’ s no sindur in my hair, and I am not wearing a bead necklace, can’ t you see?” was expressing that she was unmarried yet. But this information is not rendered in the target language due to the cultural gap between the source and target language.

To touch one’ s feet with one’ s head is one of the greatest respects that younger offers to the elders in Nepalese culture and so did Maina to Dhane, her husband. It has deeply rooted cultural value. But due to the lack of cultural equivalence in the target language, the translator failed to render this original taste in target languages.

3.3.2 Lack of Socio-cultural Knowledge (of the SL) of the Translator

As translation is the re-creation of a new text, the translator should be known not only to the TL but also to the TL culture. Translation cannot be a good one until the translator is well known about the socio-cultural knowledge of both the SL and TL. If not, there can be a high chance of mistranslation and thus, the original meaning will not only be deviated but also will be lost. For example, the translator has translated the SL term “bhauju” as “elder brother’ s sister” instead of “elder brother’ s wife” in the translation of Basain due to which the TL text has conveyed wrong meaning than what is true. It is mainly due to the lack of socio-cultural knowledge of the translator of the SL text.

3.3.3 Avoidance of Redundancies in Translation

It is not necessary to translate redundant information while translating the text. As translation is the transformation of a message in the text, it is the duty of the translator to convey the meaning of the text to the TL readers. Thus, it is common and is natural not to render the redundant information. However, the application of the omission of redundancy sometimes does not convey any message, i.e. the important information can also be omitted from being transferred.

3.3.4 Inappropriate Selection and Application of Translation Techniques

The selection and application of appropriate translation technique has significant value in rendering the message. It partly depends on the situation and mainly on the skills and knowledge of the translator. That is, the proper selection and application of translation techniques depends upon how competent the translator is. The translator, who is familiar with the translation techniques and is competent to apply them, becomes able to transfer the message more clearly. The selection and application of proper translation techniques determines how well the text is translated. A great difference is found between the applications of ‘A’ technique instead of ‘B’ in rendering the message of some culturally bounded text. Thus, the translator’s knowledge of translation techniques determines the quality of translation and conversely, the quality of text in rendering the message accurately shows the capacity of the translator to render it out.

3.4 Compensating the Meaning Loss in Translation

As the two languages and cultures are not the same, it is natural and common to have (to exist) a meaning gap in translation. Furthermore, cultural texts have more loss of meaning in comparison to the translation of other types of texts. What is important is how to deal with those losses to better the translation. Literary translation is the translation of different literary texts which always seems to be expressive. It is the dynamics of the individual act of reading as well as the virtue of the literary work of art being absorbed to its cultural heritage. This is why, it assumes a degree of independence and stability which in turn, creates gaps while translating. The loss of meaning in translation is serious and problematic however, not so challenging as the barrier to convey the message. That is, there are some ways to compensate the meaning loss in translation. The main ones that the translator has used in translation have been discussed in brief below:

3.4.1 Definition

Definition makes the text linguistically transparent so that it becomes intelligible to its target readers. It further clarifies meaning and makes the translation simple. It is one of the techniques of translation mostly suitable in case of the literary texts having cultural values. In the translation of the novel the

translator has defined so many terms to clarify the meaning to the target language readers such as- bhauju, the elder brother’ s sister (???) (Wife).

3.4.2 Addition

The translator adds some items in translation to make the TL rendering transparent, clear and intelligible; mostly in case of the items having complex literature with cultural terminologies. While describing about teej, the translator has added some more concepts to clarify its meaning.

3.4.3 Deletion

Deletion in translation is due to the structural/linguistic gap. It also occurs if the text is so complex or the items to be translated are redundant. It creates meaning gaps as well as solves the problems that arise due to the gap of meaning.

3.4.4 Substitution

Some cultural texts having the universal reference of meaning can be substituted to each other. It helps the translator to overcome the problems of gaps of meaning. But the translator has not used this technique while translating.

3.4.5 Transliteration

It helps preserve the meaning in case of having no equivalence of the SL terminology in the TL at all. The terms like- angeri, angenu, banko, thuli, baidar etc. have been just transliterated.

3.5 Overall Interpretation

The conveying of the message of any text is completely based on the application of the appropriate translation techniques. The intensity of cultural flavour of the terminologies determines the choice of techniques to the translator. Unless transforming the message of cultural words is central to the comprehension, the rendering becomes worthless. Faithfulness is important for comprehensibility and transferring a message correlating the source text. How good a translation in terms of transfer of meaning, intelligibility, transfer of cultural message, faithfulness and source text correlation is mainly determined by how able is the translator to select the appropriate techniques to translate the text? The deeply rooted cultural words having no sense of equivalence in target language are generally deleted in translation both to avoid redundancy and to save translation from mistranslating the message of the text. The literal translation is used as the best technique of translating most of the culturally bound words however, the selection and utilization of the same technique does not seem leading to the same equivalence in target language and vice-versa.

The information presented in the following table shows the overall status of meaning loss in the translation of the novel Basain:

Sr. No.	Status of Meaning Loss			Examples
	Case	Number	%	
1	Complete Meaning Loss	4	18.18	1) Maina touched Dhane’ s feet with her head and stood up.
				2) She is dying to go, anyway.
				3) There’ s no sindur in my hair, and I am not wearing a bead necklace, can’ t you see?
				4) We must cut Dhane off from sharing our water; we don’ t know who did this or what he was.
2	Partial Meaning Loss	11	50	1) Dhane got up, went to the fire place meaning loss took out a glowing ember from the ashes, and lit a stub of tobacco wrapped in an âgerī leaf.
				2) If anything goes wrong, I’ ll lose the oxen and everything else as well.
				3) She helps her husband’ s sister to wash the pots and to mill and pound the grain.
				4) Teej had just taken its leave of the women of Nepalese society.
				5) These streams bring life to the khet field in the valley below.

				6) With one voice, the council judged in the baidar’ s favor and authorized him to take away Dhane’ s oxen and buffalo.
				7) And she remembered that once Jhuma had mentioned that her monthly dharma had stopped.
				8) The path forked at Bagedanda.
				9) The old folk said that an old woman of the forest lived on these cliffs.
				10) The next morning, all the big man of the village gathered in Nande’ s yard to decide Dhane’ s fate.
				11) Every object in there-the millstone and the husking machine, and even the beams, pillars and roof pole- gave her plenty to remember...
3	Meaning Deviation	2	9.09	1) Hariram! The price of the buffalo is 120 rupees; the interest must be delivered to Harriram’ s house at the end of every month.
				2) It seems that bankale has got it.
4	Meaning Unclear	4	18.18	1) He works hard, he is industrious
				2) lulu! Drive them up from behind, thuli.
				3) One day in the middle of Magh, Jhuma had gone into the forest to cut some fodder.
				4) They say he left in Phagun -22.
5	Mistranslation	1	4.54	1) Bhauju (Bhauju: elder brother’ s sister), the food’ s ready. Would you serve the meal today?
Total		22	100	

4. Findings

The major findings of the study have been listed in the points as below:

a) Twenty two different cases of meaning loss have been found in the translation of Basain. However, the loss of meaning has a variety of nature. In some instances, it was found that the meaning was lost partially and in some other cases the meaning was lost completely and in some more cases the meaning was deviated/mistranslated as well.

b) As the instances of meaning loss are concerned, the following status of the loss of meaning is found:

- Complete meaning loss: 18.18%
- Partial meaning loss: 50%
- Meaning Deviations: 9.09%
- Meaning unclear: 18.18%
- Mistranslation: 4.54%

c) The study has explored some causes of the loss of meaning to occur in translation. Some of the major causes were pointed out as below:

- Cultural gap (case-8/12)
- Deletion (case-10)
- Negligence of the translator (case-7)
- Lack of functional equivalence (cases-18/20/21/22)
- Lack of co-cultural and socio-cultural knowledge of the translator (cases-6/7/9/14/15/19)
- Over generalization of the meaning (cases-3/13)
- Carelessness of the translator (case-4)
- Incomplete linguistic knowledge (of the SL) of the translator (case-5)
- Transliteration (cases-11/16/17)

d) It has been found that the quality of translation is determined by the selection and the application of the proper translation techniques. It also depends upon how competent and familiar the translator is with the SL culture and the message to render into the TL.

e) As a whole, following techniques have been found effective to compensate the meaning loss in translation:

- Definition
- Addition
- Deletion
- Substitution
- Transliteration

References

- Bhandari, G. (2007). *Study on techniques and gaps of translation of cultural terms: A case of the novel 'Basain'* (unpublished M. Ed. thesis). Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Bhattarai, G. R. (2002). Bridging gaps in translation: An experience of rendering. *Journal of Nepali Literature, Art and Culture*, 4(2), 68-70.
- Bhattarai, G. R. (2007). *An introduction to translation studies*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- Crystal, D. (1987). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- House, J. (1994). Translation: Evaluation. In R. E. Asher & J. M. Y. Simpson (Eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (pp. 4700-4708). Oxford and New York: Pergamon Press.
- House, J. (2002). Universality versus culture specificity in translation. In A. Riccardi (Ed.), *Translation Studies: Perspectives on an Emerging Discipline* (pp. 92-110). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ivir, V. (1987). Procedure and strategies for the translation of culture. *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(2), 35-46.
- Newmark, P. (1981). *Approaches to translation (language teaching methodology series)*. Oxford: Pergamum Press.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A textbook of translation* (Vol. 66). New York: Prentice hall.
- Richards, J. C., Platt, J., & Weber, H. (1985). *Longman dictionary of applied linguistics*. Hongkong: Longman Group Ltd.
- Sharma, B. K. (2004). *An evaluation of translation: A case study of a translated textbook of social studies for grade ten* (unpublished M. Ed. thesis). Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Wilss, W. (1982). *The science of translation: Problems and methods*. Tubinger: Gunter Narr Verlag.